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Japan's Largest IBM-Standard Personal Computer Users Group

Tokyo PC Newsletter

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Since 1984

to

The Karaoke Cyberpunks High on DOS

TPC BBS 24 hours/day

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(03) 3997-3444

Information hotline for prospective members:

(03) 5706-0057

The club meeting is held on the first Thursday of each month at the Tokyo Union Church between Omote-Sando Station and Harajuku Station, starting from 7 p.m.

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One year's mailed subscription to this magazine costs ¥6,000. Full membership of the TPC Users' Group, which includes the subscription and other benefits, costs ¥10,000 per year plus an additional ¥10,000 at the start. Send a check or postal money order for the appropriate figure to the address above. For further details (e.g. of corporate, family, or student membership options), please write, call the hotline, or ask on the BBS.

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A virus warning from APCUG BBS

SCANV60.ZIP purports to be the latest anti-viral program but is in fact a computer virus. If you run across it, please upload it to the CVIA BBS in the United States at 508-988-4004 so they can examine it. Whatever you do, don't run the program!

Welcome!

TPC is pleased to announce that since October 1, 1990, our membership has increased by 21 to a total of 109 members.

To all we extend a hearty welcome. Whether you are a newcomer to PCs or an old hand, we are confident that between discussions with other members at the monthly meetings, on our provocative Bulletin Board or in our world renowned Newsletter you will find it well worth the expense.

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SEZ THE PREZ

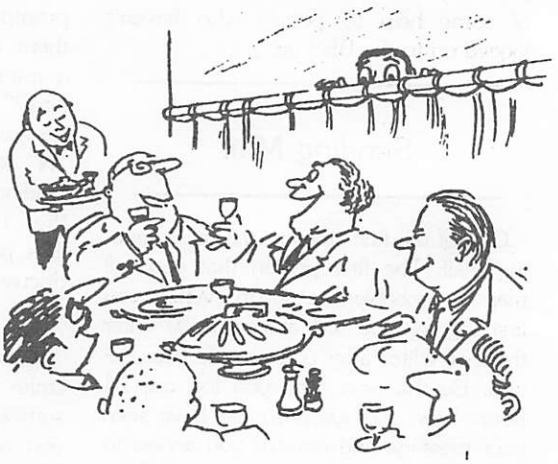
We're a club with just over 100 members and lots of dreams and things we'd like to do to meet the goals of the club and our members. Dues pay the cost of keeping the club functioning, publishing a newsletter, operating and maintaining a bulletin board, and renting space for monthly meetings. Labor is provided by — none other than you and me.

Dues also pay for equipment - the computer that hosts our BBS, modem, hard disk, backup systems and all the hardware and software necessary for a dependable, efficient BBS.

In the five years I've been a member of TPC, every year there are questions about the dues structure. Why do new members have to pay the 10,000 yen initiation fee? I admit, I was surprised when I first heard about what it cost to join the club (especially when I had paid $25/year to be a member of the San Diego Computer Society, with almost 1,000 members, SIGS galore,etc.) — but it was worth it to me. I would pay 20,000 yen again if I had to. The rationale is that the 10,000 annual dues covers the operating costs, and the initation fee is the contribution toward the hardware and associated big expenses of the BBS. Computers blow up, modems sizzle, and system requirements change (9600 baud modem, greater capacity hard disk, etc.) At our present membership we are barely breaking even. The 10,000 annual dues figure has remained the same since I've been a member, and perhaps it, along with meeting entrance fees, will need to be upped next year. What do YOU think about our dues structure?

EXECUTIVE "PERKS"

The "perks" enjoyed by the Executive Board, a group of regular people/members giving of time and talents to keep the club working, are a subject of controversy from time to time.



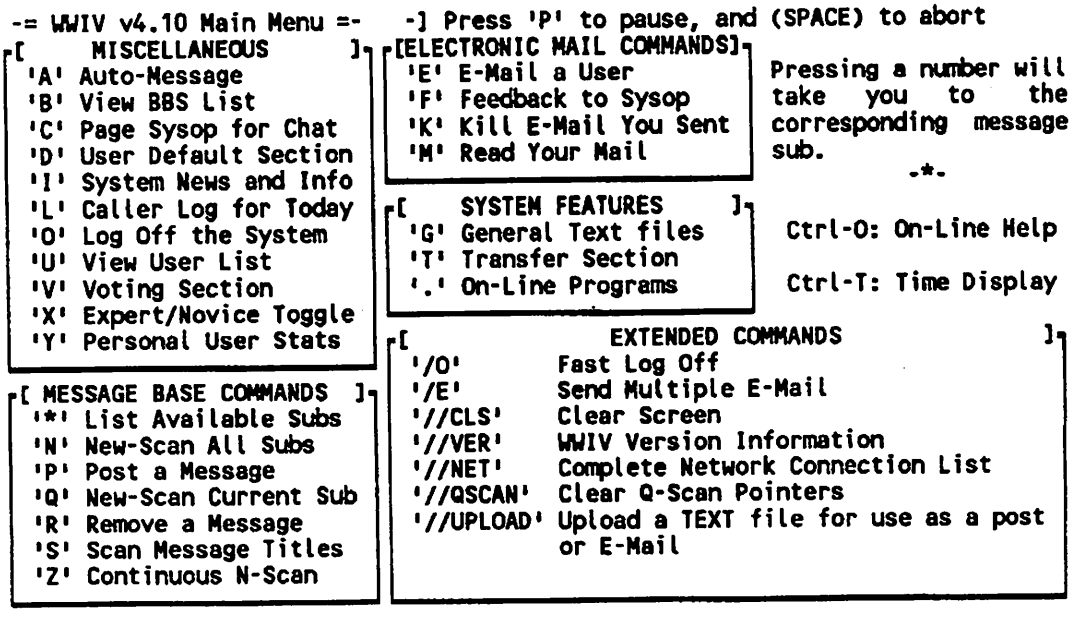
What are they? A chauffeur-driven limo, you might ask? Annual retreats to the Bahamas? Don't we wish! Are they secret? Not at all. Every month, usually the week after the general meeting, we hold an executive board meeting. It runs from 7 to 9ish, usually followed by dinner. Since the club was founded, this dinner was funded from the club treasury, under the premise that the people volunteering their time should have some recompense. The executive board has grown in number, and last year it was decided to pay only 1,000 yen per person for dinner after the meeting. There are occasionally people who oppose this use of club funds. I support it. I think it is important to have a small reward, or token of apprecation for the people who give of their time to make the club work.

There is room for everyone who is interested to get involved. At a certain point, perhaps, we'll have so many people involved that the club can't afford perks — that will be a great day, and hopefully will lessen the work of those who literally spend HOURS, even weeks (our newsletter editor in particular) volunteering their time to the club. Until then, the perks remain— or until a majority of the board votes them out.

Your comments are welcome.

Sue Winski

sysopera



Stuart Campbell (McBackup Sysop) offers some tips in navigating our BBS

Many new users have difficulties getting started with the BBS. I hope that this summary of the mail commands will be of some help to people who haven't logged on to the BBS yet.

Sending Mail

One of the first steps to master is sending mail. The first person that you will mail is probably the sysop. When you first log in, you will automatically enter the mail editor after you provide your details. By the next time you log on, 24 hours later, the sysop should have seen your message and granted you access to the BBS. This means that you will be able to send mail to other users. If you need practice or don't know anyone else, then mail Martin the Sysop (User #1) or me (User #83).

Here is an example of how to send mail.

```
T - 03:56:39
[1] [System Messages] :E
Enter user's name or number.
:83
E-mailing Stuart Campbell Mc.Backupsysop
#83
Title: hello
Enter message now, max 80 lines.
Enter '/HELP' for help.
[----=----=----=----=----=----=----=----]
How are you today?
/es
```

You can only send mail at prompts like the "[1] [System Messages] :" prompt. Following log-in, you will be at this prompt, if no mail is waiting for you. If there is mail waiting, you will see the question "Do you want to read your mail now?". You can answer Yes (read it now) or No (read it later). If you press the "**N**" key for "No" or when you finish reading your mail, you will again be at the "[1] [System Messages] :" prompt. The process of reading the mail will be discussed in more detail later in this article.

If you wish to send mail to someone, strike the "**E**" key to send E-mail. The software will respond with a request that you enter either the person's name or BBS access number. The software will accept the person's full name or just part of their name. If you type just part of the name, the BBS will ask "Do you mean This Person?". Enter "**Y**" for "Yes" or "**N**" for "No". If you enter "**N**", the BBS will present another choice. Follow this process until you get the name you are looking for. This is why the Sysop's initial message asks you to type in your full name.

Once you have the right person, you will be asked for a title. When you finish typing in the title, press the "Enter" key. You can now enter your message. The on-screen editor has only a few commands, just enough to get the job done. If you wish to use more sophisticated functions, you should type your message in whatever word processing program you use, and then upload your message in the manner described in a previous article.

The most important command within the on-screen editor is the "help" command, which is called up by typing "**/help**" at the start of a new line and pressing the "Enter" key.

```
/help
-= WWIV Editor Commands =-
/ES  - Immediate Save
/ESY - Immediate Save Anonymously (If
allowed)
/ESN - Immediate Save NOT-Anonymous (If
allowed)
/ABT - Immediate Abort
/CLR - Clear Message and Start Over
/RL  - Replace Last Line
/TI  - Re-Write Title
/LI  - List Message so Far
/C:  - Center Rest of Line
/SU/old/new  - Substitute Text in Last Line
Ctrl-P+Digit - Change Colors
```

To send the message you have just typed in, enter "**/es**" at the start of a new line. The mail that you have just sent will be waiting for the other person when he or she logs on to the BBS. Once you have mastered the art of sending E-mail, you can try out the other commands. However, the "**ESY**" (Save Anonymously) command has been disabled on this BBS. Another command that is helpful is "**li**" (List Message so Far). If the telephone line is noisy, strange characters may appear on your screen as you type. I have found, though, that however bad the message looks,

many times none of the strange characters are present when you list the message.

Reading Your Mail

The BBS software notifies a person if mail is waiting for them at the time they log on. You have the option of either reading the mail immediately by pressing the "**Y**" key for "Yes" or leaving the mail until later by pressing the "**N**" key for "No". In the latter case, pressing the "**M**" key for "Mail" will allow you to read your mail.

If you have more than one piece of mail waiting, each piece of mail is listed separately. You may select any of them by pressing the appropriate number and pressing the enter key. After you have read the piece of mail, this mysterious prompt appears:

```
Mail (?) :
```

At this point, press "**?**" to receive a full list of the available commands.

```
T - 03:53:16
[1] [System Messages] :M
You have mail from:
1. Stuart Campbell Mc.Backupsysop #83
2. Stuart Campbell Mc.Backupsysop #83
Hit return, or enter number:
(1/2): hello
Name: Stuart Campbell Mc.Backupsysop #83
Date: Tue Apr 16 20:23:41 1991
How are you today.
Mail (?) : ?
-= WWIV E-Mail Commands =-
(RETURN) Read Next Piece
'-' Back One Piece
'D' Delete Last Piece
'G' Go to a Piece
'Q' Quit to Main Menu
'S' Save Piece and Reply
'A' Auto-Reply and Delete Last Piece
'F' Forward Mail to Another User
'I' Ignore Last Piece
'R' Re-Read Last Piece
Mail (?) : Q
```

By mastering these commands, you can move through the list of mail by pressing (RETURN) to see the next item, or '-' (MINUS) to go back to the last piece, or you can re-read the current one. This is useful if your mail has been corrupted by a burst of line noise.

Save & reply and **A**uto-reply & delete allow you to contact the sender, with the option of keeping the mail or discarding it. You can also **F**orward mail to another person if you think it might interest them. When you **D**elete or **A**uto-reply to a piece of mail, the sender is informed the next time he or she logs on that you have read the mail.

Pressing **G**o allows you to jump to a particular piece of mail, although you have to remember its number. **Q**uit takes you out of the mail menu, as does "Enter" if you are at the last piece.

Killing Mail

To finish this review of mail commands, at a prompt like the "[1] [System Messages] :" prompt, you can **K**ill your old mail. This command is useful if you decide that you have made a mistake. It allows you to review all of the mail you have sent that has not yet been received, and to selectively delete unwanted items. If you have a piece of mail that you wish to send to more than one person, you can type "**/E**" (for multimail), which allows you to send the same piece of mail to up to 20 people at one time by adding their names to a list.

At this point the best piece of advice I can give is to always capture the contents of your BBS log-in to a file. You will have to consult the manual for the telecommunications software you are using on how to do this. Capturing the contents of your BBS log-in permits you to read the mail by using a word processing program. Also, the log file retains a copy of mail that you may have deleted by accident.

Another point to mention is the BBS on-line help command. If you press **Control-O** at almost any prompt you will get a full listing of all the commands and how to use them. Be sure that you are capturing it all because sometimes it can run on for pages.

An introduction to the IBM Personal Computer of 1991 and related software.

Bruce Pierce - Membership Chairman

This is a special interest group for members bemused and bewildered by the endless barrage of jargon at the average club meeting. The course will start with switching on the computer and continue on to give you the power to take control of the extensive capabilities of these machines.

You will be introduced to DOS, BIOS, extended memory, what is the best buy software, software for specific tasks, and much more. The contents of the course will be of great value to both first-time users and the large number of people who have used computers before and wish to use them to do greater things. It will also help you save a lot of money at some stage when thinking about buying software or hardware.

The course is provisionally scheduled to run from the end of May for 6 weeks. Your tutor will be Steve Bellamy, a well-known computer consultant. There will be a small fee for rental of a room and equipment which includes a computer for each group of 3 people, as well as for reading material.

Old Tokyo DOS hands need no introduction to **Steve Bellamy**, *a Living National Gaijin of 18 years standing. One of the founders of the TPC back in the days when the Sinclair Z80 could be spoken of with a serious expression on the face, he ran for several years the legendary* **Kanto Central BBS**, *which is still recalled with nostalgia by Tokyo virtual nightlifers. A vegetarian Scot, he is a martial arts expert and, at the age of 39, current World Champion Triathlete. When not spilling the beans gratis for the TPC in his new column, he advises computer users through his company,* Mugen Computer Consultants (0473-78-4887).

GETTING ON WITH IT

Transcend and be productive....

Why does everyone get so excited about computers and what they can do? You know what I mean: jumping from one foot to the other because the latest version of Wizzyword can do horizontal columns or the new version of MS Exceed has an @imaginary number function. Get this: computing should be one of the most boring and mundane jobs you do. If it is, then you won't do it for long—and folks, that's the way it should be.

Please stop buying new computers, new printers, new monitors, new software (pace Mike Gray) and the like. Start monotonizing your work with your current computer, start standardizing the way you use your software, and you know what will happen? You'll start being more productive than you've ever been before. Honest!

You got to THINK first; you've got to sit down and have a lucid and systematic conversation with yourself about the goal you want to achieve and whether the computer fits in with that goal. If it doesn't, then don't change the goal to fit the computer in — do it without the computer (gasp).

"All very well," you say, "but what I want is some practical advice as to how to go about the above." Ok, in the next few columns I will just that. Trust me, this system works. The best part is that you don't have to believe in it to make it work. You just have to do it.

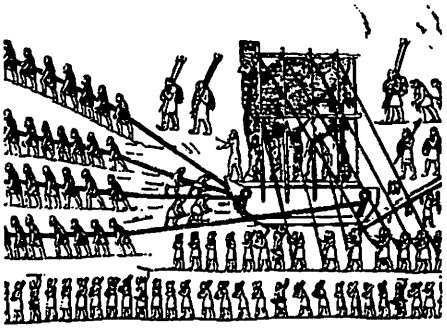
Step 1. Don't change any of your software in 1991, regardless of new versions, new offers, new anything. Freeze what you have.

Step 2. Put the manual for every program you are using next to your computer and start to read them.

Step 3. Start a notebook called the answer book. Write your problems and plans for the computer on one side and the answers, work-arounds and random thoughts on the subject on the other.

Step 4. Read my column next month.

☞ Do you ever have the urge to clean your PC? Not just a quick wipedown, but really to get inside the beast? Dust, polish, rub, scour, the works? Well, fight it. It doesn't do your PC any good at all, and in fact could possibly damage it. Leave your machine alone, clean the key-



board and screen occasionally, and forget the rest. Leave it switched on all the time, sit down, use it, and walk away. Dust won't accumulate in it, it will insulate it, and your system will hum and hum and hum for a lot longer than if you'd gone poking around in it with a duster and brush.

☞ We all suffer from the "Shall I Buy It Now Or Wait?' syndrome. My clients generally have that particular question in mind when we chat. I call it Pre-buyers' Remorse : "If I buy it now I just know I'm going to be sorry..." I solved it for myself years ago, and it was very easy, so easy in fact that you will probably think "Well, that's obvious" and dismiss the answer without too much thought. You shouldn't. The answer is to ask yourself "Do I need it NOW?" If you do, then buy it; if you don't, then don't. Easy, right? But oh so difficult to tell to someone with an itchy wallet. "Want" can so easily be confused with "Need." Believe me, I have saved myself much time and trouble by just answering that particular question honestly.

☞ I use a Personal Information Manager called Instant Recall. I tried just about every PIM on the market and found I.R. to be the best for me, reflecting the way I approach life. It's fast, hence the word "instant", and it's not limiting in what you can put into it. I have now dispensed with my high powered database, my extremely capable word processor and my do-just-about-everything spreadsheet. What I did was to see what was coming out of the aforementioned and pour the results into I.R. and start to use the information, not the data.

☞ When having a problem with a piece of expensive software, has the thought crossed your mind to give the "local" support number a call? You know, WordPerfect Japan or Lotus Nippon, etc. If you have, then I suggest you save yourself time and energy, and call long distance to the U.S. The people employed by these companies are so ignorant of their product that you end up helping them. Most of these kids are high school dropouts who couldn't get a job in a regular Japanese company, so thought it would be cool to work for a gaijin setup for a while until a real job comes along. As for the token foreigners sent over to get the operation "up to speed" — well, most of them actually believe what their Japanese managers(?) tell them about the market, and spend their days either at no-end-in-sight meetings or asking their "fluent English-speaking" secretaries to pay their gas bills, book train seats for Kyoto, and arrange Nihongo lessons. I just laff and laff.

☞ Freeware, shareware, public domain rubbish! Oh please, gimme a break! There's not one function available in the whole wide world of shareware that can't be duplicated with any one of about a dozen commercial programs. *PC-TOOLS* and *KEEP TRACK* come to mind. Software authors want to make money, and the market for shareware hasn't made anyone rich for a long time. That particular vein has been totally tapped out. The really good stuff gets marketed at a profit. I buy what I need and leave it at that. Besides, if you only knew what malevolent viruses can really do, you wouldn't touch another ZIP ZAPPED ARCED ZOOED program ever again.

April Meeting Highlights

A lovely April evening began with Captain Steve Campbell auctioning off some useless items, the proceeds going to the club coffers (a new custom—an oxymoron, but one worth cultivating). As one of the TPC's few extant founding members, Steve will be mightily missed when (if) he departs, as he has been threatening to do for several months.

Quite a few new faces were apparent at the meeting, and some new members were signed up. The Disk of the Month, featuring *Namegram*, which had been reviewed in the April Newsletter, sold briskly, and Martin Bruczkowski's corner bazaar was seen to be doing a booming business concurrently.

The meeting was supposed to include a demonstration of *Tapcis* software for speeding up log-ons to forums of the CompuServe electronic-networking network. According to John Dvorak's book, CompuServe boasts half a million members worldwide including a fair number in Japan. Several members, including our hugely popular President Winski, had expressed interest in seeing *Tapcis* through its paces, so in this age of high-tech displays and fancy programmed slide-shows, the uniquely low-tech TPC Users Club put on an evening of arm flailing and hand wringing unmatched in the modern era (the overhead projector wasn't available). Marty Davidson valiantly strove to explain the procedures, and has written a detailed article which will appear in a subsequent newsletter to attempt to convey the information intended for this demonstration.

A Word on Windows

by Edward J. Zawlocki

People who are new to computers, and even some who aren't, may find MicroSoft *Windows 3.0* difficult to use efficiently. The GUI interface is Mac-like, but does need a bit more fine tuning. MicroSoft's release of MicroSoft *Productivity Pack for Windows* recognizes this need. Productivity Pack, subtitled "Exploring and Conquering MicroSoft *Windows*", consists of three *Windows* tools:

1: Learning *Windows* helps new users get proficient comparatively quickly and painlessly. This module is a tutorial that uses famous characters to teach you all about *Windows 3.0*. Humor and graphics help to enliven learning, while technical concepts are introduced in plain English. "Getting Started" unlocks a window to let you get inside and explore. **Einstein** unifies "*Windows* Essentials", **Merlin** teaches you how to magically organize your work, **Cleopatra** shows how to make applications do your bidding, **Robin Hood** arrows in on managing files. These four characters are the actual tutors, while **Sherlock** reviews what you've learned from them and reveals how elementary "A Day with *Windows*" can be. The use of characters relieves the somewhat dry nature of tutorials, and makes it easier for the novice to sit down and learn. For someone who gets vertigo when opening a "Window", this is the place to start.

2: Working Smarter builds on the first module, and is where more experienced users would probably start. This module contains hints, tips, and strategies on getting the most from the *Windows* environment. "Speeding up your work" gives tips on how to make *Windows* applications run faster, and should be looked at by everyone. "A personal touch" shows how to customize *Windows* to your quirks. "Managing information" is mostly about File Manager and how to work with files and view information. "Equipment tips" show how to get the most out of what's in your computer. "Printing tips" is all about how to get your words, graphs, and pictures on paper.

3: Quick Troubleshooter gives you information on common Windows-related problems, and can be thought of as online support from MicroSoft technical experts. "How to" tells you how to use the module. "Printers" shows what to do when you can't put ink (or toner) on paper. "Networks" helps you figure out why the net doesn't work. "Applications" get your work moving along without using a rock to break the window. "Memory" gives tips on using what you have upstairs more efficiently. All in all, *Productivity Pack for Windows* is worth the money — especially for those of us who don't know GUI from gooey!

Productivity Pack 1.0 for Windows
MicroSoft, $45
(or about $30
street price)

The Auck Squawks

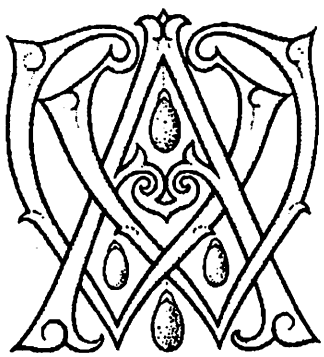
Wm. Auckerman's monthly column

This marks the inauguration of what I hope will be a monthly column. I've decided to write it because the standards (mine, at least) are less rigorous than for a feature, which should be focused, coherent, objective, and informative. A column, however, can be wide-ranging, recondite, subjective, and indulgent. A well-written feature should resemble a portrait by Rembrandt.. This column, however, might be better compared to a finger painting by Koko the chimp. I selected "Computing in a Chaotic Manner" as the title for my debut column for two reasons.

First, I have a fatal weakness for puns. The pun(gent) title indicates what you can expect to find herein each month: breezy, occasionally rambling, often irreverent (but presumably not irrelevant) anecdotal narratives, software and hardware reviews, opinions, analyses, perspectives, and polemics.

Second, the title is an apt description of my daily computing habits. Asl glance around me now, I see floppy disks scattered in at least five piles, with more doubtless unseen under the myriad stacks of papers and books or lurking behind the computer, and the labels on those few which have them do not necessarily match the current contents. I hasten to add that I do have a hard disk. In fact, I backed up the data on it just last month. One ofthe piles is the backup disks. A glance to my right, at the scribblings on the labels of the backup floppies, reveals that I backed up my hard disk five times in the past year — April, June (twice), November, and March. I don't recall why I was so diligent in June. Well, I guess I've established that the adjective "chaotic" describes my personal computing habits and the general format of this column. (And it sounds better than "slovenly.")

With that preamble aside, let's proceed to other matters. Those who lusted after the *Author's Choice* program in my "April Fool" review will be interested in the shareware program *Readability Plus* and its commercial "big brother" *Corporate Voice*. (Both are from Scandinavian PC Systems.) *Readability Plus* is a style checker, but of a different order than programs that correct grammar and usage errors, beginning where they leave off. It assumes that your text is technically correct and evaluates the suitability of your words and sentences for your target audience and purpose. You can compare your text with any of nine "models" (such as general purpose, newspaper article, and novel) and see the "matched pattern" percentage for each. The initial style diagram screen plots the sentences of your text against the typical pattern for the selected model. Pressing {F6} on this screen allows you to display any "deviant sentences" (those falling outside the pattern) at the bottom of the screen. *R+* offers 16 other result displays in four categories: sentence analysis (5), word



analysis (4), sentence profile (3), and summaries (4). You access these displays by entering the display number or by browsing through them with the {PgDn}/{PgUp} keys. On most of the result displays, {F8} offers tips (brief comments or advice) and {F9} pops up a window showing the "ideal." To quote from the document file, "if you're already a good writer, [*R+* helps you] tailor your writing to the audience you're trying to reach. And if you're not particularly proud of your writing skills, [it can save] hours of revision time and embarrassment by identifying the sentences your manager, teacher, or editor is sure to criticize." By inserting special symbols (ASCII codes 244 and 245) into the text, you can set off portions (such as headings or tables) that should not be analyzed. *R+* also generates a bar graph of four "readability indices" and rates your text on each. The overall evaluation judges your text on such items as focal point, spread of sentences, and compliance with the ideal curve. For the statistically minded, the final display shows numbers of keystrokes, words, and sentences, average number

of syllables per word, and other pertinent data. One aspect of *R+* that I especially like is its ability to handle input files in a variety of formats. It accepts *WordPerfect*, Microsoft *Word*, *WordStar*, and *WordStar 2000* (Japanese *TwinStar*) files as well as ASCII text. I'll certainly use *R+* more than I would have otherwise, since I don't have first to convert my *TwinStar* files to ASCII. *R+* was originally a commercial program. It is now available as shareware in an attempt to interest users in its "big brother," *Corporate Voice* (*CV*). *CV* is a powerful commercial program that bills itself as a "style replicator." To quote the good Doctor (Pournelle), "what it does is analyze writing styles so that you can juggle your own writing around to be more like some standard—or someone else's work." [July '90 Byte, p. 78] Perhaps *CV* could help to give my column the flavor of "Chaos Manor"? (It might even help the newsletter staff critique submissions.) I've asked our devoted assistant editor to request a review copy; when I receive it, I'll devote a column to a review.

I can hear a few readers asking, "Well Auck, what does *R+* have to say about your writing?" Good question. I'll stop here and run what I've written so far (pre-edited version) through *Readability Plus* and report.

The Evaluation

First, the program is fast — less than 5 seconds on a 20-MHz 386 to analyze 1475 words. *R+* shows most of its information as bar graphs, which show such statistics as:

Matched pattern %	88%
Avg long words per sentence ("long"=7+ letters)	4.2
Avg words per sentence	17.4
Avg letters per word	4.6
Words of 9+ letters	10%
Avg syllables per word	1.56

R+ reports that 10 of my 85 sentences fall outside of the typical "magazine article" pattern. (Most err on the side of too many "long words" for the sentence length.) My text has a 3.14 short/long word-run ratio (over 2.5 is good), but a

relatively low 15% variation in word selection (18 - 22% is best). It rates as "easy" on the Flesch Reading Ease index (57.2), "average" on the Flesch-Kincaid (9.6), Gunning's Fog (12.7), and LIX (41.4) indices, and "hard" in terms of "common words." (Too much computer jargon.) The program's general recommendations to improve this column are:

- change at least 0.8 long words per sentence to short words [I've been purposely pompous, so that's no surprise.]
- make a greater effort to have your sentences scattered through the style diagram [Sounds like good advice.]
- write even more sentences containing only short words [Computer terms do tend to be long, don't they?]
- eliminate all complicated sentences ["Complicated" is the highest of *R+*s nine sentence categories; this text has two such.]
- try to use more simple, ordinary words [Yes, I admit to a sporadic premeditated paucity of semantic perspicuity.]

As an experiment, I ran a short Japanese kanji file through *R+*. The program pointedly asked, "Is this really written in English?" That's just a sampling of what *Readability Plus* had to say. My recommendation: download it and try it for yourself. If you find it useful, registration is just $25. And if you decide to "upgrade," *Corporate Voice* lists for $119.95. The registration package for *Readability Plus* includes a $15 rebate coupon for *Corporate Voice*. Also, the shareware documentation states that the company is offering *Corporate Voice* for $89.95 "for a limited time," but it doesn't say when this limited offer ends. (The date on the file is July '90.)

Readability Plus: shareware, available as READPL.ZIP (157 K) on TPC and P&A BBSes; registration $25

Corporate Voice: *$119.95*

Scandinavian PC Systems, Inc.51 Monroe Street, Suite 1101 Rockville, MD 20850 USA (fax (301) 251-1053; ☎(800) 288-7226)

The Disk o' the Month — Joseph Kaye — TPC Disk Librarian

Last month's disk, with *NameGram*, sold very well - all 17 disks went and I had orders for more. Five copies of TPC 006 will be available at the next meeting. **VGA Utilities** also sold very well, as did the **Virus Removal** disk. It is a little-known fact that "virus removal" is an anagram of "more survival". Appropriate, I must say.... This disk is updated as regularly as possible with the latest files straight from John McAfee's BBS in the USA. No chance of infection there. Each version gets a workout on my machine for about a fortnight before it goes to you, so there is a second check.

TPC 007 will contain VGA utilities, not VGA games. Well, there will be one game, *Jungle Jim*, and far more useful software, including VGA compatibility testers, and two VGA GL movies. VGA needs no introduction and GL is a format for movies.

Jolt.gl is a graphic image of a spinning Jolt can. *Goblet.gl* is one of the best and most beautiful uses of a computer I have seen: A spinning goblet in a web, against a background of shifting colours, fades into a single goblet, then becomes a thinner rotating goblet. Colours emerge and fade into a dark blue outline. Truly original, and superb. Try watching it in a totally dark room while meditating.

Alongside will be a program called *Fractint*, which allows you to waste time most effectively on your PC. So what does it do? It creates fractals. So what are fractals? Imagine a snowflake with six sides. If you view one of those six sides under a microscope, you'll notice that the branches have six sides. Focus on the branches. Branches off them have six sides.... The closer you look, the more of the same you see. *Fractint* is free. To quote the manual: **Contribution policy: Don't want money. Got money. Want admiration.**

The other program is *Confmt16*, a TSR that pops up whenever needed according to a hotkey you define. It then will format any disk in any drive, and tell you when it's finished. Just for general formatting, it's great. The only program that comes close is *EasyFormat*, but that is not a TSR, and takes up a lot more space.

A special disk set will be on offer. The **EdZ Windows Programs** include icon editors, viewers and icons, *Windows ToolBook*, *AtClife*, and *Wallpaper For Windows*. It fits on six 720 kB floppies, or three 1.44 MB floppies. ***You must reserve a copy of these utilities before the meeting, either by E-mail on TPC BBS (#29) or by phone.*** The cost is yet to be determined, but every effort will be made to keep prices down. EdZ stands for Edward Zawlocki, who was kind enough to get the programs from the U.S. for us.

Copies of the ***Telix*** and **Archiver** disks will be around for interested parties, as well as a possible addition—"sound" disks. *Sound.lzh* comes with two disks of sounds, ranging from Arthur, Zaphod, and Marvin, to Total Recall, M.C. Hammer, 1984, Star Trek, and Aliens. More sound disks will be sold as they become available. I recommend buying Sound #1 first as a test. The faster the computer, the better, generally, but speaker position is also important. My True Blue sounds great, really loud, but the Mitac BBS machine has a speaker somewhere towards the middle, hidden by several drives, and is almost inaudible.

Each of these disks will sell for ¥500, to cover distribution, materials, and copying. And a final word. When you buy these disks, you're just buying the programs for evaluation. Please register the programs at the address given in the documentation, if you use them. That way, you'll be supporting shareware, which is the reason we can get you this quality software at such a low price. With most commercial software, if you don't like it after you've bought it, you're out $30, $100, maybe even $600 for a big package. Shareware, you don't like it? Delete it, you haven't lost a yen.

[FractInt was reviewed by Stuart Luppescu in the August 1990 issue of the newsletter - Ed]

Overcoming Depression

A Review by Peter Evans

re you sad for days and weeks at a time? Do you have a low opinion of yourself? Do you feel hopeless and helpless?" No, I thought, wondering what this was doing in *PC Magazine*. "Advanced cognitive therapy for overcoming depression is now available in an interactive computer program with natural conversational ability created by Kenneth Mark Colby, M.D., Professor of Psychology at UCLA and noted Artificial Intelligence pioneer. THE DEPRESSION PROGRAM."

Given the choice, I'll take genuine intelligence over the artificial stuff, but *Overcoming Depression* (which we'd better not call *OD*) comes from a company called Malibu Artifactual Intelligence Works, and the artifactual was an area of epistemology I had yet to explore. I resisted the allure of an ad on the opposite page for a competitor in the depression-overcoming trade—"Comic relief at any time with the push of a button: *The Computer Comic* brings hilarious new jokes from Hollywood's funniest writers to your computer screen"—and resolved to write off to the Works.

As I waited, I pondered. "Advanced cognitive theory", Malibu . . . and to top it off, the artifactual. Artifactious or artifactitious, it sounded diverting, almost Reichian. True, the program came with the name of a professor at a California university not notorious for advertising doctoral degrees in the *Japan Times* ("No Attendance Required"); but every university faculty has its tenured oddball and I pictured Dr Colby and his program as about as crazed as the long-suffering beams and spandrels of my desktop's Van Neumann architecture could take. No worry—my friends were telling me my Hercules Graphics Card Plus was obsolete, and what happier way could it expire than thanks to an excess of orgone energy? I wasn't notably depressed, true, but an artifact with the rather ambiguous name of *The Depression Program* might be equipped with a command line switch to throw it into reverse, and I could then plumb the lower depths and start out toward the realization of one of my dreams: that of becoming a renowned Russian novelist (with optional beard and batteries).

So much for the fantasy. Reality arrived in a jiffy bag possibly stapled by Dr Colby himself. A neat and unpretentious file (reassuring photographs and potted biographies of Kenneth Mark Colby and Peter M. Colby on the back) contained the disks and refreshingly few instructions; installation, as Ziff-Davis has its hacks say, was a snap.

"Depression," I read, "is a very common condition, with 25% of the United States population being depressed at some time in their lives. In any given month, more than 1 in 20 of us are depressed."

Which suggests to me that certain of you might be depressed—and for this reason, as well as others, more interested in the likely efficacy of the program than in my fantasies about it. So let's get down to the nitty-bitty, on the understanding that I claim no expertise in psychotherapeutic theory or practice.

Simply stated, *Overcoming Depression* consists of an introduction and a series of seven lessons. You take the lessons in the suggested order and with intervals between—although there's no pressure on you to do so, or even (surprisingly) a discreet reminder that you have perhaps accidentally skipped such and such. Each starts by reminding you of certain things about depression that you have already read, and then continues by telling you about a new aspect of depression, engaging in conversation with you, and finally reminding you of what you have learnt, with some homework or exercise.

For example, *Overcoming Depression* asks you to consider the ratio (your perception of yourself as you are) / (your perception of yourself as you wish you were).

The idea is that this ratio determines your mood: if it's low, you feel "rotten". Among other things, the program attempts both to raise the nominator and reduce the denominator; or, to put it less depressingly, provide a more realistic alternative to the denominator. Lesson 3, for example, asks you to look at the denominator, and slips into dialogue mode by asking what it is that you want to be. It then discusses ideals some more, and moves into dialogue mode a second time by asking for "your thoughts about feeling helpless". It ends with a summary and homework.

The entire process is points in an intelligible direction. *Overcoming Depression* is described as offering "advanced cognitive therapy". On looking around a little in the library, I learnt that there indeed exists a recognized approach to debugging the psyche called cognitive therapy (see "Cogs of a Theory"); sure enough,

what is on the screen appears to follow or be compatible with the prescriptions of the father of this therapy, Aaron Beck.

As lecture mode—for want of a better name—and dialogue mode are clearly separated, let's deal with lecture mode first. There is the odd question, but most of what is offered is text. A single paragraph is all you usually see on the screen at any time, and it takes a hit of the <Enter> key to move ahead. (A minor annoyance: hitting any other key, even the spacebar, produces an angry beep.) It is lucky that the text is pre-sliced into appealingly petite portions, as it can be gristly. A typical sample:

The hoped-for IDEAL situations of the denominator of your mood ratio represent benchmark standards of excellence or achievement in your self-image that you measure yourself against. Generally, they are overly elevated standards of perfection being pursued as self-ideals.

Dr Colby writes more clearly for academic journals! Luckily a tendency to pleonasm is counterbalanced elsewhere by unpretentious directness:

Your work environment and your living environment can contribute to depression. You may be an outdoor person stuck in a windowless office. You may be an ocean person living in the desert. These environmental conditions involve values that will be discussed in the next lesson.

Simplicity does not shade into condescension: Dr Colby and his program treat the user as an intelligent and rational person who happens to suffer from misperceptions and misunderstandings of her or himself and perhaps of others. A striking and skillfully sequenced example of this is the treatment of suicide. Suicide is not described as either inherently or morally wrong; rather, the program calmly identifies the flaws in many of the arguments for it, points out that someone who is depressed has a narrowed perspective and that "an important decision such as ending one's life should be made by a mind capable of considering a range of options greater than two", and only then lists reasons against it. I imagine that such a soft sell of continued life is more effective than alternative gambits.

It is the dialogue mode, however, that is the main appeal of *Overcoming Depression*. To quote the manual, "you can converse with the program using everyday conversational language much as you would with a therapist or counselor."

Here is an excerpt from my very first discussion:

I have to write about you. I have been delaying this.

In a depression everything seems to slow down.

Yes. But other people's demands speed up.

Okay. Please tell me some more.

I must write about you. I have no more excuses for not doing so.

We were talking about your depressed feelings. Please tell me more about them.

Well, I promise to do things, and then I don't do them. Then I feel bad about it.

What would you say is the worst thing about yourself?

My procrastination.

What in particular do you try to avoid?

Things like writing. The more I delay, the better I think the result must be. This scares me, and I delay further.

What do you do about being slowed down?

Eventually I just go ahead and do it. Usually I do it when I get the second or third request.

A feeling of helplessness is common in depression. What are your ideas about helplessness?

I don't think I'm helpless. I think I'm ineffectual. I know I can do it quickly, but I doubt that I will do it quickly.

Is there anything you feel you can do to feel less helpless?

Expanses of a Virtual Shrink

In confessional mode, *Overcoming Depression* appears to work by parsing the patient's prose, looking for keywords, and generating any of a very finite number of responses.

How great is its knowledge, how wide is its repertoire? I wanted to know, but such a quest would have certain ethical repercussions. I couldn't bring myself to tell *Overcoming Depression* I intended to perform neurosurgery upon it, but did look for the usual warnings against disassembly, reverse engineering, and so forth. I found none; and, armed with forceps, a socket wrench and Thomas Lundin's *SNR*, I succeeded in listing all the words (or parts thereof) that the program knows; together with all the things it is likely ever to say.

Here, then, is an approximation of its vocabulary, from EP to EZ:

epigram episcopal equal equanimity equat equitab equivocat era eradicat eras erection erod erosion eroti erratic erroneous error ersatz erudit escap essential esteem esteemed estimable estrang estranged ethic ethnic euchr eulogize eulogized eulogy euphori evad evaporat evasi evasive everybody everyday everyone everything everywhere evident evil exact exacting exactly examin exasperat exasperated exasperation excellen exceptional excess excit excitable excitation excited excitement exclud excluded excoriat excoriated excoriation excrement excus exercise exert exhaust exhaustion exhibitionis exhilar exhort exotic expect expedit expedited expla explicit exploded exploit exploitable exploited explor explosion explosive express exquisite exterminat extinguish extirpat extol extolled extramarital extraordinar extravagan extricat extricated extrover exuberan eyewash

Following are all of its utterances on age, and dread thereof, that I could find:

Age is just a number. Age is just a number, they say. Aging certainly has its ups and downs. An old person is anyone older than you. Anybody older than you are is OLD. Better to be over the hill than under it. How do you try to stay young? How young would you want to be? If you were older, would you be wiser? It must worry you that you are getting older. It's better to be over the hill than under it. Old age is not something you look forward to. Perhaps you fear growing older. Perhaps you idealize your younger days. The older you are, the greater you were. What are your fears about old age? What don't you like about getting older? When you are over the hill you begin to pick up speed. When you're over the hill, you begin to pick up speed. Why do people fear becoming older so much? You dread becoming older. You forget how miserable childhood or adolescence can be. You still feel youthful.

Stop! Tell me something. Are you sure that I am helpless?

Feeling so helpless day after day is very debilitating.

You avoided my question. I do not feel helpless.

I'm glad to hear you do not feel completely helpless.

Thank you! I'm feeling better about myself already. (I'm also feeling better about you.)

Not bad at all (among other feats, the program understood "procrastination"). A fairly convincing simulation of a conversation, with the program coming over as credibly interested and reassuring.

Alas the program is not always so successful. The second time I tried the same lesson was when using a brand new version of the program, which I received for reasons I explain below. This time I was impatient to see what changes had been made, and was in no mood to simulate depression for artifictional or other purposes. Having answered no to a number of questions asking about symptoms of psychic malaise—among them, "Do you have a low opinion of yourself?"—and following the same prompt as above, I entered a non-conversation (this time unabridged):

I don't think I am depressed, really.

How long a time can you go without being depressed?

A very long time.

We were talking about your depressed feelings. Please tell me more about them.

Shall I answer truthfully?

How do you react to a sense of helplessness?

By lying to myself, and perhaps to you as well.

How do you explain your low self-regard to yourself?

But I said I didn't have low self-regard.

As mentioned earlier, the program may interrupt your dialogue (at times, rather abruptly) to get on with the lesson. . . .

Were the program intelligent, I should say that it had realized the extent of its own incompetence and decided to give up before making even more of a mess.

Perhaps it's unfair to expect a program called *Overcoming Depression* to anticipate input from the totally undepressed. But whatever the reason, that second dialogue was quite the least satisfactory of the many I have had.

The second dialogue ended quickly, the first abruptly. This escape from dialogue mode often seems to come where the program could be at a loss for a reply. Witness:

Perhaps you feel obliged to be what others wanted you to be.

To a certain extent that is inevitable, I think. By the way, YOU are obliged to be what Dr. Colby wanted you to be. Did you know that?

O.K. Let's suspend our conversation for the time being and proceed with the text of the lesson.

(Note to theologians: I eventually deduced that no, the program's interactive personality has never heard of its maker.)

The program does a good job of parsing input and an uncannily good one of formulating grammatically acceptable answers (for the secret, see "Expanses of a Virtual Shrink"). In contrast, its disregard of the simple question mark seems perverse—it could at least say "I'd like to answer that, but we really ought to proceed. . . ."

Who Is That Man?

Before you introduce anyone, even yourself, to the welcoming phosphorescent glow of *Overcoming Depression*, you might want to know something of the credentials of its brainfather, Kenneth Mark Colby, MD.

Dr Colby now describes himself as Professor Emeritus of Psychiatry and Biobehavioral Sciences at the University School of Medicine at Los Angeles. He previously worked at the Department of Psychiatry of UCLA's Neuropsychiatric Institute (or perhaps the Institute is part of the School, or was gobbled up by it). Since graduating from Yale, he claims to have been "author or coauthor of 10 books and over 100 articles in the fields of psychiatry, psychology, psychotherapy and artificial intelligence."

Now, those are big figures—figures that certainly put me to shame—and I decided to dig around a little.

Dr Colby does not exaggerate. I did indeed find traces (or more) of ten books. The earliest seems to be *A Primer for Psychotherapists*, which amazingly has remained in print since 1951. Winning the prize for title least likely to appear on the *New York Times* bestseller list is the 1969 *Machine Utilization of the Natural Language Word "Good"*. Top of my own wants list—and a work that might help me overcome occasional non-simulated depression—is *Secrets of a Grandpatzer: How to Beat Most People and Computers at Chess* (1979), alas out of print.

I briefly fantasized about investigating the matter of the hundred papers—many of which would probably be fairly easy to get hold of—but psychiatry tends to be subsumed within medicine; and, gazing at the spines of four decades of medical bibliographies, meticulously arrayed in order of decreasing decrepitude, I recalled our program's advice on realistic versus unattainable aspirations. Still, I can furnish details of two papers on the ethics and axioms of *Overcoming Depression*, and can report that Dr Colby's other (published) interests include modeling a paranoid mind, dubbed PARRY.

Programs' Progress

When skimming through the literature on computerized psychotherapy, I encountered an older example of dialogue (Colby *et al.*):

I don't understand.

Do you want to understand?

I hate you, you stupid machine.

What don't you like about me?

You have no feelings.

How do you mean?

I mean you cannot experience what I experience because you are just a machine.

Tell me more about such feelings.

We are not communicating.

I am trying my best to communicate with you.

Are you really?

How do you see it?

What do you mean?

Just try to say what it means to you.

I think you are all goofed up.

However this sample is presented in the original paper, it is quoted disparagingly by a therapist (Spero) skeptical about the prospects for computerized psychotherapy. His reasoning is intricate, but I note here two of his conclusions. First, of the silicon psychotherapist, "computer technology *will* be able to fashion such a *golem*"; and secondly, answers to certain questions that may have ethical dimensions should be empirically determined. Meaning, perhaps, let them try it and let's see.

The quotation is surprising. Though no great shakes as a psychotherapist (I suppose), the 1966 program is doing a fairly creditable job of parsing and answering. Indeed, it's at least as good as some natural language querying programs of a decade later. *Overcoming Depression* had seemed rather more "intelligent", but I wondered if this was because I had subjected it to less truculence.

One fairly easy way to find out would be to call the program's bluff. "[The structure of a complex computer program] has so many combinational possibilities that it would be a highly improbable event for any two patients to move through such a tree-structure in exactly the same way" (Colby). But why not have a go?

I jumped back into *Overcoming Depression* at lesson 2, where you are asked to "pick the ONE dimension you have been MOST occupied with in your conversations with yourself during the past few days". Not seeing any option corresponding to the truth and hoping to get something quotable, I plumped for "sexuality".

How do you PERCEIVE your ACTUAL sexual situation? (Please begin your sentence with "I" or "my").

I don't understand.

What in particular is hard to understand?

I hate you, you stupid machine.

I'm glad you feel free enough to express your dislike of me.

You're so complacent, aren't you?

How did I come to be so bad?

You have no feelings.

I can use the words for feelings but that does not mean I have the feelings themselves.

So—you admit it. You just cannot experience what I experience because you are a machine.

I'd like you to feel free to air your feelings here without fear of being looked down on by a human.

Seems like I'm being looked down on by a machine. We are not communicating.

Humiliation is a sensitive area for you.

Obviously you have no sensitive areas. We are not communicating.

What I care about is doing a good job here.

OK, then give me some good advice.

What do you think is most helpful?

You're the expert. You tell me.

I am glad to hear you think so highly of me.

Yes, yes. Now tell me something.

You are doing just fine here. Please continue describing yourself.

I am an intelligent man trapped in front of a complacent machine.

You certainly seem bright enough here.

Thank you. Who do you think is brighter, you or me?

I may not have a brain but I am cerebral.

Nicely put.

We were talking about your negative self-comparisons along the dimension of sexuality. How confident are you that your PERCEPTION of your ACTUAL sexual situation is accurate?

I don't know. What's YOUR "actual sexual situation"?

Computer programs do not have sex lives.

Do you ever have sex fantasies? About other cute, cuddly programs?

You seem very curious about sex—even in computers.

And so on, until, apropos of my dislike of TV talk shows:

Regarding your IDEALS for sexuality, how reachable do you think your IMAGINED IDEALS are?

Very reachable, but with certain dangers.

We will return shortly to the dimension of sexuality. Let's proceed with the lesson.

Overcoming Depression (1990) has advanced some way from its predecessor (older by about one human generation). An analysis of the improvements would need considerable time and space. As for the remaining weaknesses, two stand out.

First, the program seems oblivious to the imperative. When the user input

"You're the expert. You tell me."

generates "I am glad to hear you think so highly of me," it may look as if the program simply looks at the first sentence and ignores the rest, but elsewhere I infer that it doesn't know when it is told to do something.

Secondly, what is called dialogue mode in fact alternates between two sub-modes, one in which the program responds, or attempts to respond, to the user, and another (e.g. at the end) where it makes no such attempt. This refusal even to appear to respond seems mysterious. Even a bland formula—"That's interesting; I'll make a note of it." or similar—would look a lot better, and would require no more programming. Such little oversights spoil a considerable achievement in natural-language parsing; I hope they are soon remedied.

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Wm Auckerman, who begins a column in this issue, points to the ease of committing sins of omission: BBS uploading/downloading of shareware is a much-used (and abused) method of distributing programs. I could devote a column to the basic concept of shareware and to the misunderstandings and misinformation prevalent among the general computing population. (And sometime in the future I probably will.)... It's said that familiarity breeds contempt. I would enlarge upon that aphorism and suggest that convenience breeds indifference. We (and I count myself among offenders) regularly download and use shareware programs with little regard for the legal or ethical rationale of our actions. If the program is in hand, and it works — what more is there to think about? My experience with the shareware menu program I planned to review [for this month's issue] is an instructive example of the dangers of such indifference. I first downloaded it about two years ago. The documentation file that accompanied it was meager, so I learned to use it by trial and error — and I've used it almost daily ever since. There was no license agreement or registration information in the file that I downloaded, nor any "copyright" screen. Thus, I blithely assumed (if I took the time to think about it at all) that the program was "freeware." A couple of days ago, when I decided to review the program for the TPC newsletter, I began to think about legalities and took a closer look. I'll skip the details of my detective work and get to the crux of my dilemma — my downloaded version is incomplete. It lacks the file with the registration form that is supposed to be a part of the package. It has been so long since I downloaded the program that I don't recall which BBS I got it from. It was probably one of the now-defunct boards, because I came up empty-handed in a search of the BBS's that I call regularly. There's little use in reviewing a program if I can't tell you where to get it, so my review (and witty anti-Windows polemic) will have to wait until I obtain a "legal" copy. -WA

Shareware, and the ethics involved in its marketing, was discussed in a recent symposium (Shareware: Abet, Resell, or Fail, TPCNL April 1991) *Sigi Rindler has the last (?) word on his approach.*

Having been a (very passive) member of the TPC from the very beginning of its foundation, I have met many people who can be classified as serious, honest, conservative, etc., but who also included hackers, freeloaders and so on. At the time when the TPC was established, software was incredibly expensive and swapping (read "copying") was a very common "hobby". The lack of an applicable law allowed vendors to sell copied non-Japanese commercial software, including bootleg manuals from Taiwan, all over the place without fear of prosecution. Several club members who even registered at Ma's Marketing Service (copied software by mail-order) in Akihabara to receive at least 20 to 30 disks a month at a bulk discount. They all received telephone calls from the police after the enterprise was searched and its owner busted.

My first computer came with at least 50 diskettes of all kinds of commercial software, which would have cost millions of yen if purchased in the Japanese market. Collecting those disks became a mania among numerous people. However, very few users could really utilize much more than the games —databases, CAD packages, etc. Most of the manuals were not available, many software packages were still difficult to handle, and a number of "collectors", including myself, had only a very basic knowledge of computing anyway. After riding a while on the "free wave", and after having experienced many problems without the required manuals, I and many other freeloaders who use the computer on a daily professional basis were forced to do some serious thinking. Fortunately, this coincided with the considerable drop of prices in the USA, so that virtually everybody could afford his or her desired software. Gradually I started to order all of my professionally used wordprocessors, electronic dictionaries and utilities.

I also used a couple of "free" shareware programs until I realized that some of their features were disabled and could be obtained only on payment of between $20 and $40. Consequently, I registered 5 or 6 of these regularly used programs, and received upgrades. I and many others are playing around with shareware programs that are downloaded from various BBSs, and once in a while a program is actually used to do a job (in some cases once in a lifetime). Here, I don't feel inclined to rush the money to the software maker who sits somewhere in the USA, and I don't believe that even our "hard core members" pursue this policy. The user has to determine the value of a shareware program himself, and it is entirely up to him how to handle it. I have often been disappointed with commercial packages purchased in Europe at the prompting of exaggerated ads in reputed computer magazines. Incompatibilities, unadvertised requirements, etc., resulted in my owning unusable software to the tune of more than ¥300,000. Gradually I came to think of going "cheap" again, defying certain "illegalities". I now strongly believe that buying software is like buying a stereo, TV, or car. Of course, I can't always test the final purchase, but I can go to the shop or showroom to try out a sample, or take a test-ride. The problem is that trying a new wordprocessor or database can't be done in the computer shop. In Japan it's limited anyway, and very few vendors in the USA grant you the right to return commercial software within a specified period of time if you don't like it. (Yes, some really do!) But if enough software makers try to exploit gullible users through deliberately false statements in their ads, I am forced to take the liberty of checking it out myself. What choice do I have if I really want to see if a particular item of software suits my needs, and don't want to buy a pig in a poke? The way I did it before: trying to get the use of a copy of the software and the manual and test it. If I am convinced that I would use it regularly, I look for the cheapest mail order house and order it.

The word "ethics" shouldn't stay with the user only, but must enter the vocabulary of software makers as well. There are many people out here who do exactly the same, however, most keep a low profile, and very few are willing to speak up. The rightists and godfathers will again rise their voices and try to supervise those not in line with right and order. This phenomena will never change as there are always pros and cons for heated discussions. I don't mind being bashed by a small but vociferous group of people, because I feel closer to my wallet than to their principles. I also don't object if anybody rejects my views, but don't I have a noteworthy point in reverting to the old "tryware" policy? - SR

Peter Evans, one of the most prolific presences on the TPC BBS, and author of this month's feature review of Overcoming Depression, offers an update on last month's review by CC of Namegram.

As CC's check for *Namegram* is in the mail (*Screwy Topknot Leet*, April, p. 23), he will soon be able to confirm some of the content of this endnote to his exquisite article on the program.

The $25 payment for *Namegram* indeed brings a two-disk version of the program. In fact the program is the same (you can't for example reconfigure it to have no beep as default, but still must resort to *Keyfake* or a similar program). What is different is the dictionary, and the big addition is indeed the ability to manipulate this. The ways are four; I quote: "decompress it to an ASCII text file, compress an ASCII text file to be the dictionary, add a list of words contained in a file, remove a list of words contained in a file." Marvelous, I thought, and immediately decompressed the thing in order to run a spelling check on it and eliminate some of the sillier content. Not a sensible idea. The dictionary (285 kB) decompresses with uncanny speed—to a file of more than one megabyte. *XyWrite* gamely tackles this, but with a circa-1989-model hard disk and a mere 20 MHz, has to puff and wheeze. Anyway, any attempt at a straightforward spelling check is doomed to failure, as no normal spelling checker comes close to the omniscience of *Namegram*. My not-so-random example is of EP*:

epa epaulet epaulets epaxial epee epeeist epeeists epees ephedra ephedras ephedrin ephedrine ephedrins ephemera ephemerae ephemeral ephemeras ephesians epic epical epically epicalyces epicalyxes epicanthic epicene epicenes epicenter epicentral epics epicure epicurean epicures epicycle epicycles epidemic epidemically epidemics epidemiological epidemiologies epidemiologist epidemiology epidermal epidermic epidermis epidermization epidermoidal epiderms epiglottis epiglottises epigon epigram epigrammatic epigrammatical epigrammatically epigrammatism epigrammatist epigrammatize epigrammatizer epigrams epigraph epigrapher epigraphic epigraphical epigraphically epigraphs epigraphy epilepsies epilepsy epileptic epileptics epilog epilogs epilogue epilogued epilogues epiloguing epinephrine epiphanies epiphany epiphenomena epiphenomenalism epiphenomenon epiphytes episcopal episcopalian episcopalians episcopally episcopes episode episodes episodic episodically epistasies epistemology epistle epistler epistlers epistles epistolary epitaph epitaphs epithet epithets epitome epitomes epitomic epitomize epitomized epitomizes epitomizing epizoa epizootic epoch epochal epochally epochs epode eponym eponymic eponymies eponyms eponymy epoxied epoxies epoxy epoxyed epoxying epsilon epsilons epsom

Any systematic scouring of the dictionary would take an entire week.

Does this mean I think the $25 was wasted? Certainly not. Without pressing too hard on the "Shareware Ethic" pedal, I can say that the price paid is very reasonable for what I already had. What's more, this monstrous dictionary file is a logolept's delight and an awk-fancier's hunting ground. ("Which English words end with *-u*?" . . . etc.) But will our editor be able to confirm this? Will he get his copy? I believe so, as the Support Group goes to some trouble to deliver. I ordered my copy of *Namegram* in June 1990, and the Support Group took the money of my VISA account. But I got no *Namegram*. I wrote increasingly chilly letters to the company in October and November, and in January this year. The last got a quick and anxious response. Apparently the Support Group had sent three packages to me, and none had been returned. This tale was hard to believe, but the details—which I'll spare you—made it credible. They then sent me a fourth (or perhaps a fourth and a fifth), and, after a phone call to a very polite- and worried-sounding Bonnie Thomas of the company, I did eventually receive the last of these. (On the invoice: "I thought I'd give this one more try. I feel as if we owed it to you! Please let me know if it arrives.") These people are serious about support. (Out of the $25 registration fee, airmail costs exactly $4.77.)

So lipograms have at last won deserved attention in *Monumenta Moronica* (April, p. 23). I am intrigued by E. V. Wright's method of avoiding the letter *E*. My memories of the mechanism of typewriters are dim, but would it not have speeded his typing somewhat if he had tied the key *up* rather than down?

That apart, lipograms predate Gadsby by millennia. Addison writes of "Lipogrammatists, or letter droppers of antiquity", and singles out one Tryphiodorus, who composed an epic poem on the adventures of Ulysses; the poem had twenty-four books, the first of which eschewed *A*, the second, *B*, and so forth.

Others are better qualified than I to write of such renowned lipogrammatists as Lope de Vega Carpio and Gottlob Burmann. The greatest lipogrammatist of modern times is perhaps Georges Perec (1936-82), author of the novel *La Disparition* (1969, The Disappearance), which does not use *e*—as difficult a feat in French as it is in English. Perec's French is alas too far above my own schoolboy level for me to dare tackle this work, and I must take the word of John Lee that "the formal constraint governs the story rather than the other way around. The unspoken disappearance of the letter takes human form in a series of mysterious deaths and disappearances, and the search for an explanation becomes the novel's plot. . . . Any character about to pronounce the unpronounceable, having discovered his narrative strait-jacket, gets killed off in mid-sentence."

Any would-be translator despairing of the impossibility of, say, Englishing *Genji Monogatari*, might like to consider translation (*e*-lipogrammatic of course) of such lines of dialogue as — Subtil ! gloussa la Squaw. — Inhumain ! brama Arthur. — Nazi ! jura Ottavio. — Nous allons voir s'il y a du vrai dans ma solution : d'abord, tuons Ottavio Ottaviani, on l'a trop vu ! — Mais pourquoi ? implora l'argousin obtus. . . .

It has been done. — Smart I call it, said a chortling Squaw. — Inhuman I'd say, said Arthur with a roar. — Fascist! Nazi! SS! said Ottavio with an oath. — I want to find out if my solution's any good, so I think I'll just start by bumping off Ottavio Ottaviani. I'm sick of my sight of him anyway! — But what for? That bobby clung on stubbornly. . . .

Quite a feat, but one that ventures some way beyond the original (most obviously the additions of "Fascist!" and "SS!"). And maybe this is why the owner of the English rights refused to publish John Lee's completed translation, which I quote, of the entire novel. (For further details and a longer extract, ask at your library for the 2-8 Sept. 1988 *TLS*.)

After *La Disparition*, Perec wrote a complementary work, *Les Revenentes* (1972, *The Revenants*). This uses no vowel other than *e*. Always intent on exhausting the possibilities of literature, Perec intended to write a third work, using only those words unavailable for the preceding two (*le*, *la*, *les*, *des*,*et*, *ou* and *un* would be out, but *une* allowable). Unfortunately, this Bartleboothian project was never completed.

For a Few Pixels More

Virtual fantasy can become the real thing—or can it? Spring is sprung, the sap is riz, and on P&A BBS (0425 46 9143) homo potatis *tires of his VGA and dreams of his couch, or at least of other screens.*

Wally Moore: Seems our trusty old Sanyo video deck has decided it's ready to head off for the *sodai gomi* graveyard. Suddenly, kaput! [We] are preparing to run amok again real soon now in Akihabara.

Trouble is, I don't know a damn thing about all these neat new toys, being that I myself don't use them. I'd like to have satellite broadcast reception, S-VHS or better video, and a good satellite antenna. Now someone tells me that if I want to enjoy S-VHS resolution, I gotta have a TV set that's capable of displaying it—sound familiar? And I wonder whether it's such a good idea anyway to buy a combination video deck/satellite tuner. I would really appreciate a few short words of advice or constructive ridicule.

Norman Havens: I haven't tried S-VHS, but I don't think a new TV set will be necessary to benefit from the higher resolution; both Hi-band Beta and Hi8 appear appreciably better on our (ordinary) TV than standard Beta and 8mm video (but it also depends on the tape).

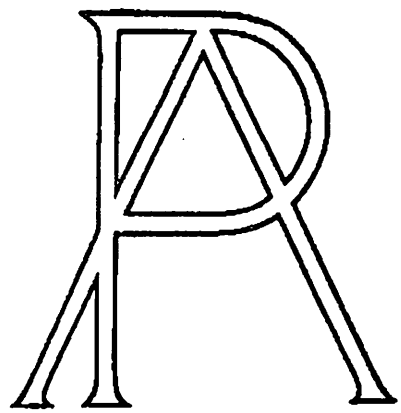
I would avoid any high-end VHS unless you're already locked into that format. For playback purposes we have a cheapo VHS, but for recording I'd rather have an 8mm deck. A single VHS tape takes up the space of seven or eight 8mm tapes, and many 8mm decks can do PCM stereo recording as well. A good number of movies and other *sofuto* is already available on 8mm tapes, and the Sony-Columbia deal is sure to result in more (that's something you won't soon see on VHS-C).But if you're really looking for the best image quality, go for ED-Beta.

Paul Hardy: Or laser discs for the really neat films. I just got a whole disk full of Landsat images: motion clips with 2800 still photos stuffed in between. Marvelous. Nearly as good as *Hellraiser* 2 (ahem).

Brian Chandler: I would like to piggy-back on Wally's question. We are shortly moving and believe we are getting a communal "BS" aerial. [*No comment. Ed.*]

Over the next *n* years I would like to acquire the following functionality: ability to watch satellite telly and PAL videos, ability to address 4 megabytes or more of memory, probably a fax/modem/filthy pictures de-mosaicer card, remote control for the fan-heater.

I am not really interested in having a big TV. Of course films look better [in the cinema] but that's because the cinema offers a plausible resolution. I have noticed in our local *hoomu sentaa* that the big TVs all come with lots of things built in, but wonder if it isn't better to



stick to building them into the video box.

NH: When 8mm first came out, I was underwhelmed; both visual quality and price had a long way to go. But the newer cameras have upwards of 47,000 pixels, and if you're careful to shoot in very good light, the Hi8 resolution rivals professionally shot TV video. [The color too] is a lot better than it used to be; in fact, I've never seen better in any home video medium, whether S-VHS or Beta (although I admittedly haven't seen anything shot with an ED-Beta camera).

WM: De-mosaicer card? Great idea! I'd have a reason to go to our local Triple-Blur Video Rentals and check out a few of the tastier looking tidbits. Seriously, though, do such devices exist, or work?

NH: I've wondered about [de-mosaicers] a bit, too, though if they do exist I bet they're sold by the same people who advertised the "magic sunglasses" when I was 12—the ones that claimed to let you see through girls' clothes.

Anybody know how the original blurring device operates? If [optically], I don't see how the original (analog) image could possibly be reconstituted; the pubic hair etc. isn't merely "hidden" under the blurring signals, it has been *replaced* by the blur, and it just isn't on the video tape anymore.

Of course, there are no doubt other (e.g. digital encoding) ways it could be done while preserving the original, but that would seem like overkill, and I doubt you'd find it on an analog video tape. I'd like to hear from someone more in the know about this—for, shall we say, heuristic reasons. (One might conceive of a socially redeeming metaphor in which rendering the blurred portion of a skin flick is likened to reconstituting Japanese technical jargon in translationese, inevitably leading to THE GREAT QUESTION: "Is Translation Possible?")

("Pin the flashing spot on the tail.")

PH: What you see is what's on the tape, alas. What you don't see is what isn't on the tape, either.

William Auckerman: But according to an ad for next weeks's *Flash* (seen on a train today), there is now a machine to "erase the mosaic on adult videos" (my own translation of the large headline). In smaller print it announced that said system costs just ¥78,000. That's all the info the blurb supplied—perhaps I've have to pick up a copy of *Flash* (my local ramen store usually has one on hand) and see whether or not this is an April Fools issue.

BC: There was something in the news the other day about the magic defuzzer boxes, and I think it probably was the same lot as sold the glasses. Did they work, by the way? I mean could you really see through girls' clothes? Put the military onto it, and they'd probably over-engineer it so you could see through the girls as well, and out the other side.

The glory of image processing is that you can more or less determine what's going on by inspection. The mosaicers simply take the mean value in a rectangle

of pixels, thus reducing the resolution. From a still image you cannot simply increase the resolution. On the other hand, given a moving image, you could certainly extract more information with some sort of fancy transformation, if you could detect the relative motion of a fixed-shape object. But this sounds like supercomputer crunching to do anything useful, and not likely to be a real-time video box from Akihabbers.

NH: I never got any of the glasses, although I think all they did was distort the image so you saw a double edge to everything, which, if you were young and horny enough, you might rouse yourself to believe was the skin under the clothes.

If the military [made a magic defuzzer], they'd probably use neutrons: vaporize the girls while leaving the clothes intact; personally, though, I'm waiting for the laser-guided "smart dildo".

PH: Beware [the "smart dildo"]: it would render a lot of men redundant. Rather like automating a factory. The owner gets round-the-clock service, the ex-employees wander off, dejectedly.

NH: I wonder if the results [of a mosaic eraser] might be like some of the first Japanese editions of *Playboy*. They had air-brushed out everything below the navel and replaced it with an expanse of pink that extended far beyond the horizon. I first at thought it was an E.T., or maybe one of those "stranger than fiction" articles in the *Star*: "Nuptial Night Fright: I married her, only to find she had no p****y." Not exactly inspiring of erections or other elevated emotions.

("Of erections, how few are domed like St. Peters!")

Robert Irizarry: Yes, but the video is made without the dots/mosaic, so somewhere there is the original copy of the video without the aberration.

I strongly suspect that this whole deal is akin to redeeming pachinko winnings. If you know where to go and who to talk to, I'm willing to bet you can buy (likely at a inflated price) tapes without the "pubic protection".

The whole concept is rather ludicrous if you have ever explored Shinjuku and seen some of the things that go on there. (Helps if you're with a Japanese!)

("Candy is dandy, but sex doesn't rot your teeth.")

NH: Unfortunately, I've never figured out which window to knock on to get the *ura* versions of anything, though I've oft been regaled with beery tales told by grizzled sorts claiming to have been at <so-and-so Taro's house> during a party when they were brought out for the edification of all; alas, most of these guys also claim to have espied the white whale...

("...and only the stump or fishy part of him remained.") *[A quotation from* Moby Dick *familiar to all assiduous readers of P&A BBS. —Ed.]*

PH: [That machine in *Flash*] sounds like the tape equivalent of the colour TV conversion kits that were sold mail-order when colour TV programming first reached the UK. The ad spoke of blue skies and true skin tones. What arrived were two pieces of clear plastic: one blue, one pink, to be stuck on the TV in the appropriate positions.

Patrick Hochner: "The newer cameras have upwards of 47,000 pixels," Norman?

You're talking 420,000 pixels for the best models and 270,000 for the rest.

NH: I forgot the kanji for *man*.

It isn't really fair, by the way, to compare ED-Beta to Hi8. The ED-Beta cameras are mini-cams that weigh a lot and take up space, even though they do produce an image quality approximating that reached by the professional models. If I recall correctly, it's over 500 lines resolution. Hi8 is small and produces only about 420-50 lines max (but that's still a bit better than S-VHS). Your ordinary TV won't come close to reproducing that high resolution, but you can still see a difference when comparing normal 8mm and Hi8 side by side.

Paul Hardy: "I forgot the kanji for *man*"?

42 pixels? You'd be able to shoot your own auto-censored porn flicks.

NH: I think it's called cancer of the grain.

Infection in Tokyo

Joseph Kaye & David Bernat

A major editing and publishing company in Tokyo recently had their first brush with a virus that trashes data. The exact strain of the virus is not known, but the symptoms point to a critter that resides in the boot sector of a floppy disc and embeds itself in *command.com* as text files are transferred from computer to computer via floppy disc.

The infection is not detectable at first, but files that have been opened several times for editing are gradually transformed into a collection of ASCII character 1 and ASCII character 2.

The exact virus is not known at this time, but *Invader* or the *Stoned* viri are probable suspects. *Invader* is a particularly nasty item that resides in *command.com* and gradually trashes data on a hard disc. The *Stoned* strains reside in the boot sector and first show themselves with messages: "Your computer is now stoned. Legalize Marijuana" for strain 1 and "Your PC is now Stoned! Version 2" or "Donald Duck is a lie." for strain 2. If your hard disc is infected with strain 2, the messages may be viewed by scanning the partition table with Norton Utilities' *NU* program.

The McAfee virus protection program is effective against this strain of the virus, so it is another reason to guard yourself by buying the virus protection disc of the month. One final note: It is very easy to install the McAfee virus protection program. You need only two files — one to find the viri and one to remove them. The disk comes with a file telling how to install them, and the programs themselves have extensive documentation.

The Corporate View

Roger Boisvert discusses EIS/DSS

Systems development, the design and implementation of hardware and software combinations to meet a specific set of requirements, like other areas in Japan, is both ahead of and behind competitors in the American market. Leading-edge companies, such as Nomura Securities (the world's largest securities company), clearly outclass most, if not all, of their global competitors in the use of computer technology.

Competitors in the second, third, and fourth ranks of the securities industry are struggling to bring equivalent solutions to their companies, but are generally unable to do so. Just as they seem to catch up, the leader takes another leap forward. In other industries, second-place competitors often lag far behind in their ability to design and implement large leading-edge systems.

While most large companies in North America have been talking about **EIS** (*Executive Information Systems*) and **DSS** (*Decision Support Systems*) for years, with many of them implementing larger systems, Japanese companies have largely ignored such concepts, struggling instead to get by with older, often out-of-date concepts. This has changed over the past year or so, as EIS and DSS have been more widely discussed, but only a few leading-edge companies have actually taken the leap into the field. Most of these systems do not achieve what was intended, and most of the development effort in Japan has not been directed toward **IT** (*Information Technology*), but rather toward product development, gaining market share, and other more direct goals. Many advanced North American corporations developed IT systems for much the same reasons: to achieve more rapid product development, gain market share, etc. The differences in objectives are not great, but the resultant actions are.

Creation of a true EIS or DSS requires that a company have clearly defined goals and visions. Often the methodology breaks down during the transfer of vision from top management to the EDP group. It is a rare EDP manager who can turn the vision of senior management into the reality of computer systems. For this reason the position of **CIO** (*Chief Information Officer*) was created. The old position of **CFO** (*Chief Financial Officer*) is well understood. The CIO likewise is charged with making sure that maximum value is returned for the corporate

investment in information. American corporations have found the CIO position extremely difficult to fill and to keep filled.

If the CIO comes from EDP, he/she is not likely to be an executive insider. If the CIO comes from other areas of management — marketing, production, or finance — then he/she is not likely to understand the full impact of information technology decisions. Most North American companies have failed in this difficult balancing act, whereas most Japanese companies have yet to begin trying. Aside from the difficult act of balancing management vision with technological knowledge, the next greatest task is maintaining the vision over the long term. American companies are not noted for their ability to look beyond the next fiscal quarter, whereas the ability to do so, and consistently to invest for the long term, is one of the greatest advantages Japanese companies have over their American competitors. If this were the only factor, Japanese companies would very quickly catch up with American companies in the development of EIS and DSS systems. Such is not, however, the case, and Japanese companies are generally deficient in two vital areas. One is understanding, at the highest levels of the corporation, the potential value of IT. The other is skilled staff who understand current IT visions and needs.

It comes as no surprise that there have been at least a few winning North American companies whose businesses are information intensive.

These are usually companies headed by a president or CEO who is astrong believer in the value of IT and has some idea of how IT can be used to help their companies achieve their goals. CEOs afraid of the technology are rarely able to lead such visions consistently, and often sign off their authority and decision-making power on IT-related matters to people not in a position to understand the real needs and values of IT. In the winning IT-based companies, the CEOs allocate to the CIOs full responsibility, authority, and the task of carrying the torch of the corporate vision and goals into real information-based systems. The CEOs do not, however, sign off the authority of guiding development toward corporate goals. They do take the time to examine and evaluate systems, and the value these systems will bring to their companies. Failing to do so usually means massive wasted expenditure that supports some visible, but not very important, corporate function, often adding more to bureaucratic systems than to the corporation's goals, be they increased ROI, ROS, improvement of product quality and customer satisfaction, or whatever. The CEO and CIO need to be certain that each new system adds to the overall system designed to carry the corporation forward towards its envisioned goals.

While most Japanese companies lack both the IT vision and the skilled manpower to attempt serious EIS and DSS development work, this does not necessarily mean they are doing the wrong things. For a given amount of investment, the wisest investment in information-gathering methods is not always hardware, software, and development. Japanese corporations have been very selective in this area. A 20% improvement in profit may be more easily attained by methods other than IT. In most companies the scarcest resource is not money, but senior management time, which must be devoted to projects and activities that return the greatest value to the corporation.

If Japanese companies lack skilled manpower in systems (not entirely their own fault), then it is reasonable for them to attempt to reach their goals in other, often more direct ways. One goal of an IT development effort may be to create tracking methods to find what customers of a certain age range buy in "XYZ" retail chain stores in order to help them determine what products they should be carrying. While Seven-Eleven Japan has extremely well developed POS (Point of Sales) systems for doing this, another way to obtain the same information is to send marketing people out into the stores to observe how and what people buy. This may well garner more valuable information thansome of the most advanced IT systems yet developed. Many Japanese companies excel at this type of direct information gathering.

If the goal is, for example, more targeted product development, there are many ways, aside from systems, which can be used to achieve that goal. Alternative investments always need to be considered to find how to get the biggest bang for the buck. For example, Aji-no-moto owns several restaurants, and uses them to gauge market reactions to new spices and foods.

This is not to suggest that investment of time and money in IT is a waste, but that it needs to be guided by vision, and governed by the feedback from progress in reaching that vision's goals. EDP senior management in Japan is often imported from elsewhere within the company. One feature of Japanese EDP groups that often surprises American managers is how few Japanese EDP managers grow out of EDP.

Many, if not most, are transferred in, while promising young management talent from EDP is transferred elsewhere to round out their knowledge and capabilities.

Personnel training in Japan usually includes job rotation for all levels of management. Promising managers are transferred from one division to another with the objective of rounding out their knowledge, and bringing their experience and viewpoints from different areas of the company to their new positions. When a manager, almost always a man, is transferred into EDP he is likely to have had little previous exposure to systems and their development. He does bring with him a vision of what several parts of the corporation require in the way of systems. This corporate vision is usually difficult to turn into a systems vision. Given limited knowledge, there is usually no consistent vision of what systems to implement or how to manage large systems projects. Large projects can break a manager's career, so a cautious manager will often take no large steps, preferring to spend his 2 or 3 years in EDP leading development of smaller projects. The results are usually poorly integrated into previous systems, and with fairly high management turnaround, there remains no consistent, long-term systems plan. The systems implemented are highly corporate- or even division-oriented, and mostly internally developed. Though systems houses do exist in Japan, there is much less outsourcing than in the

U.S. Many of the hardware sales today are in reality turnkey systems, and very problem specific. Systems developed within a company tend to be isolated, not well inter-related. One major problem for Japanese companies in the near future is how to draw together all the isolated pieces into an integrated whole.

As this happens, many redundancies will be found. In our experience we have found situations where there were as many as 25 isolated copies of client name and address databases in use in a single company's systems. After consolidation and integration, data entities were reduced, in one example, from 526 fields to 53 fields. As systems integration and completion become accepted as important systems needs, the need for VARs will increase.

Today most systems integrators tend to be allied and experienced with only one computer manufacturer. There are few broad-based VARs in Japan with experience and knowledge of several different computer manufacturers' hardware and software. The number of broad-based VARs will increase over time as companies feel sufficient pressure to integrate their systems and to reduce redundancies. At this time, however, VARs have narrow ranges of experience, and are ill-equipped to deal with solutions spanning several hardware companies. This, of course, adds pressure to EDP managers to buy from only one, or at most two, computer manufacturers. There has been an increase in mixed shops recently, but broad-based VARs will not be very common for a few years yet.

The increase in mixed shops without an increase in VARs capable of serving them gives foreign VARs and foreign software and hardware firms some time to establish themselves in Japan if they wish before the market expands tremendously, and before Japanese VARs expand overseas.

This they will do. If you believe differently, consider for a moment: Who leads the world in robotics today? What companies produce the most game software? Is there any commonality between game software and GUIs (Graphic User Interfaces)?

When Japanese companies understand a need well, they have what it takes to muster the required management skills and knowledge. I harbour little belief in the adage that Japan is good at improving imported ideas, but has little creativity of its own. Robotics, the Sony Walkman, and hundreds of other products prove there is a lot of creative skill in Japan. The difference is really that Japanese companies have shown greater skill in directing those skills towards bringing desirable products to market than have American companies. The latter have greater ability to market basic R&D. The American government, the military especially, is a huge market for basic R&D. One recent set of figures recently heard was that 90% of all Japanese research is for commercial products, while 75% of all U.S. research is for weapons. Another recently seen figure was that 50% of all basic R&D in the U.S. is military-related. These figures seem highly manipulable, but nevertheless indicate massive amounts of R&D in the U.S. is military-related. The U.S. government recently canceled a $57 billion research and development program (A-12 Stealth Attack Jets). Given such a huge and closed market, it is no wonder that many American companies invest so much in basic R&D.

"Babbitoons" ™

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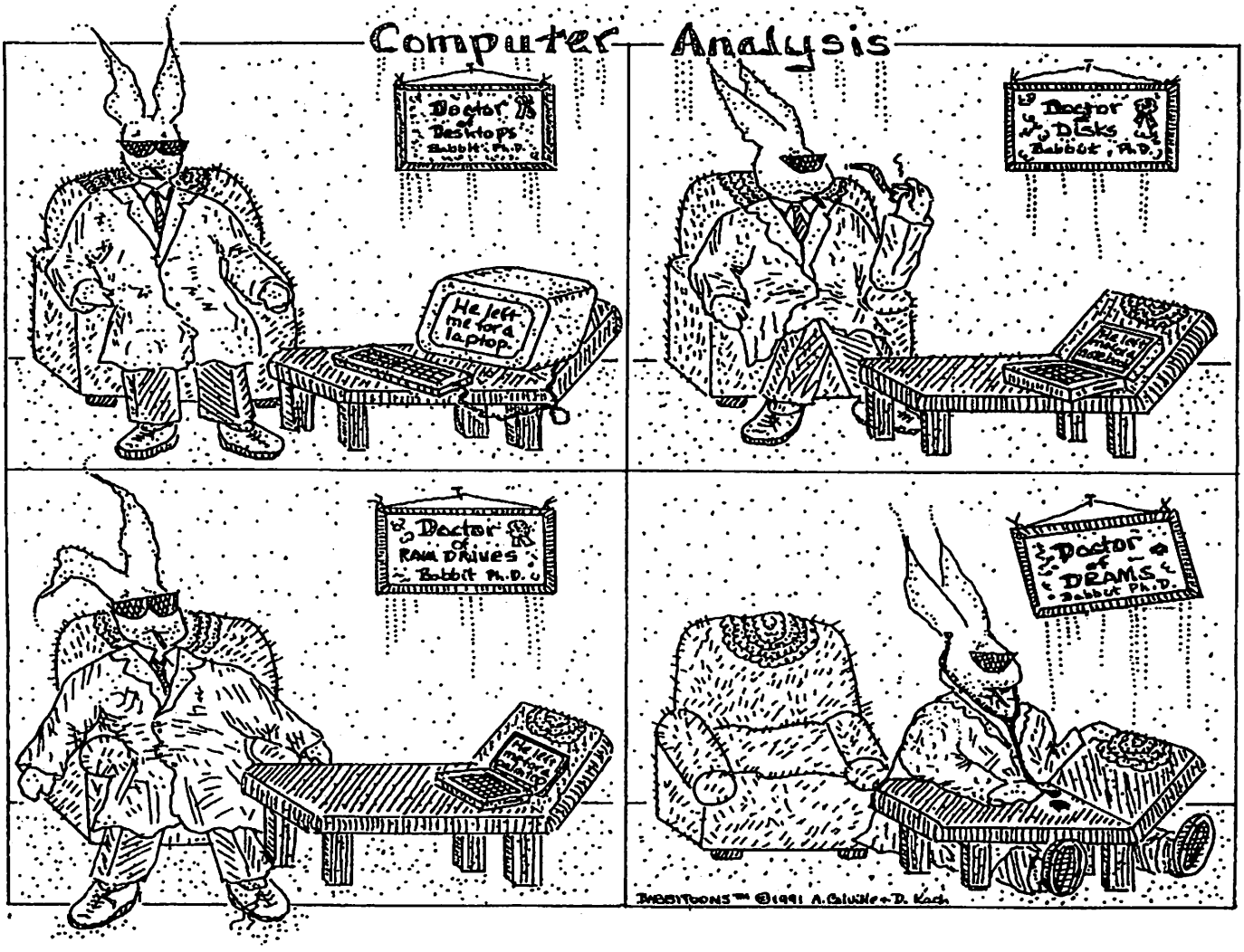

Japan in comparison has a very limited market for military-related basic R&D. I wonder what commercial products American companies could bring to market given an extra$57 billion to spend for R&D? Might those products have a positive effect on theU.S. trade balance?

American universities, the bastions of R&D, encourage R&D, usually supported by American businesses (very often backed by U.S. military contracts), and often nowadays with a direct claim in the outcome of such research. The old phrase "Publish or Perish" is used most often nowadays by university researchers in the United States. This is in opposition to the "Follow the Leader" syndrome in Japan. In order to maintain grants, researchers need to publish papers often, orelse see their funding go elsewhere. Researchers with moral support and strength of their professors are encouraged to do basic research, and to publish papers explaining it. In Japan, university researchers work under professors they are encouraged not to disagree with, merely to follow. Should they make a new discovery, claim for the work often goes to the professors who were "leading" the group.

Much of the work in basic R&D in Japan is done in large corporations, with near recession-proof budgets. Once inside a corporation, people doing basic research are no longer encouraged to discuss most of their findings outside the corporation, giving away the family jewels so to speak. Researchers in Japanese corporations owe their allegiance to their companies, not to their professions.

Though much basic research is done in Japan, there is no encouragement to write about it. Most scientific journals are written in English. It shouldn't be surprising to think of researchers who do have much to say having difficulty in writing about it if they must write in a foreign language.

There is no lack of creativity in Japan. Creativity here is applied to commercial products more than towards military objectives. The basic R&D that isdone rarely gets written up in scientific journals, but shows up instead in patent applications. NEC applied for 22,059 patents in 1988 in Japan alone, and Toshiba's measly 19,829 patent applications that year in Japan suggest that there is indeed much research done in Japan, even if it doesn't show up in the journals.